

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: SELECTED WORKS FROM CHARACTER PIECES
IN THE 19TH - EARLY 20TH - CENTURIES

HoChung Kim, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2005

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During the Romantic Era, the character piece flourished and became one of the most important genres. Even though character pieces existed as early as the eighteenth century, it was not until the nineteenth century that Romantic Era literary figures discovered that music was as powerful as any other artistic medium in expressing unspeakable emotions. The character piece allowed composers to express a definite mood, a programmatic idea, or a pictorial association. Character pieces often have titles that suggest briefness or casualness, such as a Beethoven *Bagatelle*, a Schubert *Impromptu* or *Moment musicaux*. Others have expressive programmatic titles, such as Schumann's *Kreisleriana* and Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante*.

This dissertation was based on selected works from the nineteenth century and early-twentieth century in order to demonstrate the great variety of musical thought

and stylistic development. I have examined composers from different countries and of different nationalities to establish what and how they contributed to the remarkable diversity in this genre. The selected works allowed for very personal programs. These concerts, in addition to being good combinations of pieces, are representative of the genre. The first program consisted of Chopin's *Preludes, Op. 28*; three pieces from Debussy's *Images* Books I and II; and Liszt's *Après une lecture de Dante*. The second program included seven of Beethoven's *Bagatelles, Op. 33*; Schumann's *Kinderszenen, Op. 15*; Poulenc's *Mouvements perpétuels* and *Intermezzo in A-flat Major*; Faure's *Nocturne in B Major, Op. 33, No. 2* and *Impromptu No. 2 in F Minor*; three of Mompou's *Canciones y Danzas*; four of Villa-Lobos *Prole do bebe* Suite No. 1; and Albéniz's *Navarra*. The third and final program comprised four selections from Rachmaninoff's *Moment musicaux, Op. 16*; five pieces from Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*; and Arensky's *Suite No. 1* for Two Pianos and *Suite No. 2* for Two Pianos.

I wanted to bring out nuances specific to the individual composers and show how their character pieces helped in shaping the Romantic Era. Even in the twenty-first century, an era of highly specialized musical tastes, the popularity and accessibility of character pieces stand out.

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by

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SELECTED WORKS FROM CHARACTER PIECES

IN THE 19TH - EARLY 20TH – CENTURIES

Piano Recital 1- December 12, 2003

- Chopin: Preludes, Op. 28
- Debussy: Reflets dans l'eau (from *Images* Book I)
Cloches a travers les feuilles (from *Images* Book II)
Poissons d'or (from *Images* Book II)
- Liszt: Apres une Lecture de Dante

Piano Recital 2- December 20, 2004

- Beethoven: Bagatelles, Op. 33
- Schumann: Kinderscenen, Op. 15
- Villa-Lobos: four pieces from Prole do Bebe Suite No. 1
- Poulenc: Mouvements Perpetuels
Intermezzo in A-flat Major
- Faure: Nocturne in B Major, Op. 33, No. 2
Impromptu in F Minor, Op. 31, No. 2
- Mompou: three pieces from Canciones y Danzas
- Albeniz: Navarra (completed by W. Bolcom)

Piano Recital 3- May 17, 2005

- Arensky: Suite No. 1 for Two Pianos, Op. 15
- Rachmaninoff: No. 1 - No. 4 from Moment Musicaux, Op. 16
- Grieg: five pieces from Lyric Pieces
- Arensky: Suite No. 2 for Two Pianos (Silhouettes), Op. 23